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## Concerning mostly nonacademic aspects of my July 2006 visit to Salzburg, Austria for the 6th International Whitehead Conference at Salzburg University

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**Concerning *nonacademic* aspects of my July 2006 visit to Salzburg, Austria  
for the 6th International Whitehead Conference at Salzburg University**

**Theodore Walker Jr.**

Years ago, during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, I was invited to co-chair (with Mihály Toth from Budapest) the ethics section at an upcoming international scholarly conference concerning the work of Alfred North Whitehead and Whiteheadian/process scholars. I accepted that invitation because I had been recommended by John B. Cobb Jr. When Professor Cobb says "Do xyz," I am easily persuaded to salute and do xyz. So I said I would.

That first conversation was an audio telephone conversation, and what I heard was not what I should have heard. What I heard was that the conference would be "in Australia." What I should have heard was that the conference would be "in Austria." I was wrongly imagining my future self on an Australian beach discussing the inauthentic food at "Outback" restaurants with Crocodile Dundee. Months later, when I started receiving emails written in German, I discovered I had committed to go to Austria, not Australia. This was anxiety provoking because Austrians speak German, not English. I felt I had accidentally committed myself to learning German.

Experienced travelers sought to relieve my anxiety by assuring me that I did not need to study German in preparation for my one week visit to Salzburg, Austria for the 6th International Whitehead Conference at Salzburg University (July 2006). Again and again I was assured, "Salzburg is a major international tourist destination, and a university town. Almost everyone understands English." Though repeatedly assured that not knowing German would be "no problem," I didn't feel assured. So in May 2006, I took up the study of German.

During my graduate school years (1977-1983) pursuing a PhD in Theological Inquiry at the University of Notre Dame (near South Bend, Indiana, USA) I studied just enough German (also, Greek, Latin, and French) to diagram written sentences, and then, after looking up nearly every word in a German-to-English dictionary and penciling in the English, to discern the meaning. At a rate of one hour per paragraph, this German translation skill was not adequate for audio conversations. So, given advice from Maria Habito, I began listening to PIMSLEUR LANGUAGE PROGRAMS (Simon & Schuster Audio, 2003)--a six CD collection of ten lessons for learning conversational German.

On Friday 30 June 2006 a yellow cab took me from my residence <at East University Blvd. in Dallas, Texas > to Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport Terminal D (\$55.00). As I stood in line to board Lufthansa Flight #439 (departing at 15:10 CDT) to Frankfurt, Germany (then, Austrian Flight #6422 from Frankfurt to Salzburg, Austria, round-trip economy class for \$1717.50 via Colwick Travel), a German gentleman who had observed that I was studying German phrases from Rick Steves's GERMAN PHRASE BOOK & DICTIONARY: FIFTH EDITION (Avalon Travel,

originally 2003) assured me, in clear lightly accented English, that such study was unnecessary because in Salzburg almost everyone understands English. Since the wait was long, we had time for additional conversation. From that conversation, in English, I learned that he was an electrical engineer returning home to Germany from a successful mission to assist a well-known Texas instrument maker, that he characterized U.S. businesses as generally 10 percent production and 90 percent promotion in contrast to German businesses being generally 90 percent production and 10 percent promotion, and that while in Salzburg, where again I would not need to speak German, I should enjoy a sweet called "Kaiserchmarrn."

During the Lufthansa flight, all German announcements were immediately followed with English translations, and all screen texts and printed texts came with English translations. Moreover, each time I spoke a German word or phrase to a flight attendant, I received a perfectly appropriate and perfectly spoken English response. Clearly, there was no need for me to be concerned about speaking German on Lufthansa Flight #439. Nonetheless, starting from when the plane (an Airbus A340) taxed away from Terminal D and repeatedly during the flight, I felt reassured when I patted my various pockets because, from these pockets, I could quick-draw my passport, Rick Steves's GERMAN PHRASE BOOK & DICTIONARY, McGraw-Hill's SAY IT RIGHT IN GERMAN (2006), and the HarperCollins mini dictionary--COLLINS GEM GERMAN DICTIONARY (2003).

9 hours 45 minutes later, Lufthansa #439 arrived on schedule, on Saturday 01 July 2006 at around 07:55 a.m. Frankfurt time. The connecting flight from Frankfurt to Salzburg was cancelled (due to mechanical problems with the plane), so we were flown to Munich, and bused from Munich to the Salzburg airport. This turned out to be a blessing (chance to enjoy seeing the German-Austrian country side), followed by a serious inconvenience (homelessness) that was transformed (by stranger to stranger hospitality) into a second blessing (graceful sharing of housing, food, conversation, and music, including two burned-on-the-spot CDs). The Whitehead Conference started after the second blessing.

The first blessing was that the bus ride enabled me to enjoy seeing a beautiful mountain-framed countryside along the highway from Munich to Salzburg. At the bus stop at the Salzburg airport, a young eastern non-English-non-German-speaking female tourist insisted on being photographed with my dreadlocked hair. A male-accompanying traveler snapped the photograph. A uniformed lady at an information desk used clear English to show me on a map where to catch a bus to Salzburg, the bus route, and where in Salzburg to transfer to another bus that would take me to old Salzburg, and deposit me a short walk from my destination--Universitäts-platz. Seeing the scenery while riding buses was the first pre-conference blessing.

Now for the serious inconvenience--homelessness.

My email from Dallas to Father Maximilian Bergmayr OSB <kolleg@benediktiner.at> at the Kolleg St. Benedikt (where I had reserved a room for the very modest price of 30 Euros per night [ $7 \times 30 = 210$  Euros = \$309.00]) predicted a 13:40 arrival. On account of the flight cancellation and recourse to riding buses, by the time I reached old Salzburg, it was late afternoon, near

early evening. [I was carrying a T-Mobile phone, and though T-Mobile is a European company, and though there were T-Mobile ads throughout the German and Austrian airports and on the Salzburg streets (not so many in old Salzburg), my T-Mobile Sidekick II was useless--no phone service, no text messaging, no web browsing, no email, nothing.] A city bus brought me to the edge of the old city, to Mozart-platz. From Mozart-platz to Universitäts-platz is a half mile walk passing through Residenz-platz and a maze of narrow winding cobblestone streets. I couldn't see the map clearly in the increasing darkness, and I became disoriented. I needed help. PIMSLEUR instructed German phrases flowed from my lips.

The first time I said "Entschuldigung Sie bitte. Ich möchte Richtungen. Wo ist Universitäts-platz?" ("Pardon me please. I would like directions. Where is University platz?"), I was speaking to a gentleman in a dark suit with a black-on-white ministerial collar. I was hoping he was Father Bergmayr or an associate of the Order of St. Benedict. He answered: "I'm sorry. I don't understand. I'm a tourist from America. I speak only English." We laughed. He said he was also disoriented, and that he was looking for St. Peter's church. I had just passed St. Peter's. We were just a rounded corner plus a short walk away from St. Peter's. So, pointing and speaking in English only, I gave him directions to St. Peter's: "... and turn right, and walk under the archway labeled "ERZABTEI ST PETER," and look to the left. You can't miss it."

At Residenz-platz, there is a giant fountain and an upside-down helicopter resting on its helicopter blades. When my wanderings brought me back to Residenz-platz for the second time, in the nearby open area there was a giant outdoor video screen showing the World Cup game between France and Brazil in progress, and hundreds to perhaps thousands of cheering on-lookers. The surrounding streets were thickly populated with people and bicycles and beer and shouting and cheering and chanting concerning the World Cup telecast. By asking for directions, I soon learned that not everyone in this World Cup crowd spoke English, and among the German speakers, many did not know the location of nearby Universitäts-platz.

I passed through both Residenz-platz and Universitäts-platz two or more times before a delivery man unloading the only motorized vehicle in sight (a small truck) answered my question--"Wo ist Universitäts-platz?"--by walking a few steps across the cobblestone court and pointing to a sign indicating we were at Universitäts-platz. I was there! "Sehr gut! Danke!" (Very good! Thanks!) Then, I saw cut into a stone wall-plaque: "ALTE UNIVERSITÄT" and underneath "THEOL. FAKULTÄT" and "GROSSE AULA." Nearby was a plastic-plexiglass-like sign attached to the wall saying "UNIVERSITÄT SALZBURG" and underneath "Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät" and "Universitätsbibliothek." I had arrived.

I marched up to the giant wood door, rang the bell, waited, rang again, waited, waited, rang again, and waited. I employed the large iron knocker to knock heavily and loudly on the door. Waited. Knock knock, ring ring, knock knock, ring ring, wait, wait, wait. Nothing. Ring. Knock. Wait some more. Nothing.

What I did not know at that time was that Kolleg St. Benedikt is *not* at the Universitäts-platz part of the Salzburg University campus. Instead, Kolleg St. Benedikt is a few rounded corners away--across from St. Peter's church.

The Universitäts-platz complex of university buildings includes three buildings angled together to make a triangular courtyard in the center. I methodically went all the way around the outside walls knocking on doors and ringing doorbells. No responses from inside. In the process I discovered a construction site near one corner (near the library) where I admitted myself to an interior courtyard. All three buildings were dark and silent. I recalled reading that Benedictine discipline encouraged going to bed early (by 8:00 pm), so I reasoned that Father Bergmayer and others were here sleeping. Since I was very tired and sleepy, and since I had a reserved room, I resolved to wake somebody up. So again, methodically, I walked the interior knocking on doors and ringing doorbells. Nothing.

More aggressive wake-up techniques were required. My traveling key chain included a whistle and a little flash-light type thing with a bright red strobe-light. I turned on the red strobe-light and placed it at the center of the courtyard, and after blowing the whistle several times, I shouted, "Ich habe eine Reservierung hier!" and "Ich habe ein Zimmer hier!" ('I have a reservation here' and 'I have a room here'). At the end of my shouting, there was silence. Then, more loudly, while dancing around the strobing red light, I chanted "Pater hamon, ho en tois ouranois, agiasthatow to onoma sou, elthatow hay basileia sou, ... " ('Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come ...'). I figured that chanting the Lord's prayer in Greek would surely distinguish my chanting from the surrounding World Cup chanting, and that a Benedictine father hearing the Lord's prayer being chanted in Greek by someone alternately blowing a whistle and dancing around a red strobing light would feel compelled to break discipline and come to see 'what's up.' This effort failed because there were no sleeping Benedictine fathers near this courtyard. After pausing to laugh at myself, I let myself out.

Plan B: "Entschuldigen Sie, bitte. Sagen Sie mir bitte, Wo ist die Touristeninformation?" To make a long story short, making my way to the tourist information office required re-crossing the Residenz-platz, and when I arrived near Mozart-platz, the tourist information office was closed (of course on Saturday night).

I walked back to the Residenz-platz (now growing increasingly grateful to Rick Steves for encouraging me to pack lightly) to find a bench to sit on and think (what to do?) while watching the World Cup--Brazil verses France--on the giant "fussball arena" video screen near the giant fountain and the upside-down helicopter. Since my bench was directly across from a beer vender, I considered buying a beer, but I quickly decided beer and homelessness were not good in tandem on Saturday night in a foreign country.

While seated on the bench, elbows on knees, a large black dog walked up and pressed a wet nose against my nose. Attached to the collar was a cord leading to a dark-haired neatly-trimmed-bearded gentleman in a white tee shirt, and a little gold ring in each earlobe. We exchanged greetings in German. "Guten Tag ... Wie geht es Ihnen? ..." (Good Day ... How goes it

with you? ...) Then, I asked, "Verstehen Sie Englisch?" (Do you understand English?) He switched to English, saying that the dog was named "Shiva" for the Hindu deity, that here in Salzburg people would worship my hair, that "We love your hair," and that therefore I should spend the night at his home. Welllllllllll, What's a homeless foreigner to do?

When the fussball game ended, Mr. Nermin Muslimovic insisted upon carrying my bags, with me following, from Residenz-platz to his home at Nonntaler Haupt Str. 12 (Salzburg 5020) where I was served a generous meal (chicken with spices and hot sauce, potatoes, green salad, bread, tea sweetened with honey) and provided a bed for the night.

Mr. Nermin Muslimovic is a Muslim from Croatia. He served in the military. I saw a photograph of him in military uniform. He was prepared to defend his village against attacks that thankfully never came. He describes himself as an ex-Yugoslav.

Because I had already learned that Mr. Muslimovic was Muslim, when we reached his home, I was not surprised when I was invited to place my shoes in the line of shoes just inside the door, and I was not surprised when I was invited to sit low near the floor, but I was surprised when I looked up and saw on the wall a large poster of African-American hip-hop musician Tupac Shakur.

Mr. Muslimovic is a Croatian hip-hop musician and recording artist, now living in Salzburg. He knows more than I know about African-American hip-hop music (and he recommended attention to a group called "Bone" and a recording called "Art of War"). Also, while we talked, Mr. Muslimovic used his computer to burn two CDs with his Croatian hip-hop music--one CD is called "Bslje Vreme" (Better Times) by CYA, and the other is called "Vrucina Gradsksg Asfalta" (Hot City Streets) by TRAM 11, and he gave them to me as gifts. "Danke!" (Thanks!) The lyrics in one of the songs is about walking across the countryside at night, and navigating by reference to the distant lights at U.S. military installations.

Later that evening, after extended conversations about hip-hop music, upon my noticing his original-German-language copy of Herman Hesse's book SIDDHARTHA, Mr. Muslimovic said of SIDDHARTHA--"This book changed my life ..."

The conversation was good. The food was good. The sleep was good. The whole experience was very good--Sehr gut. "Danke schön" (Thank you) to Mr. Muslimovic--a Buddhist-inspired-Croatian-exYugoslav-exmilitary-Muslim-hip-hop artist living in Salzburg who welcomed a homeless stranger on behalf of the citizens of Salzburg who "love your hair."

Before leaving, I asked Mr. Muslimovic for his address so I could send him a DVD of a movie about Siddhartha called "Little Buddha." Since he is more comfortable with German than English, I pledged to send him the German language edition.

At 7:00 the next morning--Sunday morning--we were awakened by bells from the nearby 17th century Glockenspiel bell tower. We had herbal tea for breakfast. Then, after more

conversation and tea, Mr. Muslimovic walked with me to Residenz-platz where he introduced me to an out-door artist--Zindovic Radovan - Igor [Preregistr. 11 A-5020 Salzburg Austria <igor@zindovic.com> <www.zindovic.com>]--drawing and painting images of Mozart near our Saturday night bench at Residenz-platz. The artist snapped digital photographs of us. Then we went our separate ways. Later that week, on Friday morning, I returned and purchased two little "Mozart 2006" drawings. He granted me a substantial discount off the marked price because, he said, he liked my hair.

After visiting two churches--Franziskanerkirche and Kollegienkirche--where there were no Sunday morning services in progress, I returned to Salzburg University's school of theology, and entered the university courtyard by a now open door (it had been locked closed on Saturday night), but again, there was no one in sight. I pulled some chairs up to a table in a shaded place, tuned my little battery-powered fm radio to a classical music program, got out my books and papers, and started work on preparing for the Monday morning start of the Whitehead Conference. I figured if I worked here long enough, sooner or later, someone would come along who could direct me to Father Bergmayr, and Father Bergmayr could direct me to my room. I figured correctly.

While I was officeing in the university courtyard, I was joined by two English-speaking conference participants (one from the USA, one--Jeroen van Dijk--from Scandinavia). Like me, both arrived on Saturday, and both had no room. One (from the USA) rented a car and went looking for a hotel room. Given that the World Cup was being celebrated in Salzburg, and that this was the time of the international celebration of Mozart's birth in Salzburg 250 years ago, there were no hotel rooms available in or near Salzburg. He had to drive all the way to Munich to get a room. The other homeless conference participant reported that he went to a nearby camp ground and rented a tent and slept on the ground in his rented tent. I offer him space in my anticipated room, but he said he enjoyed the camp ground.

Later that Sunday afternoon, a university official came through, and he told me in English that I could find Father Bergmayr at the Kolleg St. Benedikt across from St. Peter's [St. Peter-Bezirk 8-9 A-5020 Salzburg]. He offered to show me how to get there, but that was unnecessary because St. Peter's was the one place (other than Universitäts-platz and Residenz-platz) that I could locate without recourse to a map or other help.

When I reached Kolleg St. Benedikt, I banged lightly on the door with the heavy metal door knocker, and Father Bergmayr leaned out of a second (or third) floor window (during the summer in Salzburg, most windows are open most of the time) and exclaimed in English, "You must be Theodore Walker. Welcome." A few seconds later the pleasant black-robed Benedictine father was pulling the door open, saying, "Where have you been? We've been waiting for you since yesterday!"

Later that evening in the Kolleg St. Benedikt residence hall not far from my room, I encountered a sign on a door at the end of the hall reading "Bad Dusche." Bad Dusche? Hmmmmmmmm. My quick-draw mini-dictionary revealed that in German "Bad" means "bath" and "Dusche" means

"shower." Then pushing the door revealed that "Bad Dusche" means here are bath tubs and shower stalls. The "Toilette" was across the hall from the "Bad Dusche."

The Whitehead Conference started on Monday morning. Almost all of the papers were in English. I encountered no one at the Whitehead Conference who did not communicate very well in English. Almost all of the presentations, lectures, papers, and discussions were in English. For the next six days it seemed true that 'almost everyone understands English.' At night on the streets away from the university Whitehead conference but still within the old city, it seemed less true, especially if a fussball game was in progress.

One evening at Dom-platz under one of the three archways near the front entrance to Salzburg Cathedral where Mozart had been an organist, I met a musician--Mr. Michael Trippold. He was playing the flute, drinking beer, and selling CDs of his music. When he needed to bicycle somewhere to purchase another bottle of beer, I kept watch over his CD collection, CD player, flute, sheet music, music stand, money box, folding chairs, and other stuff. He returned with two bottles (and later went for two more bottles). While listening to his CDs I heard a creative flute-rendering of Bach that I especially liked. When he returned, I said I wished to purchase that rendering of Bach. He reached for a CD called "Mozart Is Back in Town." I said "No, Bach, not Mozart." Mr. Trippold said the Mozart CD includes Bach because when the spirit of Mozart came "back in town"/Salzburg, it inspired him to play Mozart and Bach. While listening to music until well after midnight, mostly Mozart-inspired music, we enjoyed a long rich conversation, in English, about Mozart, Bach, music, hand-rolled tobacco, more about Mozart, marijuana's contributions to the creativity of musicians in Salzburg, local Salzburg history, the statues of biblical figures on the Salzburg Cathedral, local anti-Semitism and WWII, that some women in Salzburg were once said to have collected as treasures grass and dirt stepped on by Adolf Hitler, the movie "Amadeus," authentic Salzburg foods and hang-outs, and more about Mozart.

Mr. Nermin Muslimovic had been correct in predicting I would receive favorable treatment in Salzburg on account of my long dreadlocked hair. One evening at a sidewalk cafe table, I responded to a request, in English, for an autograph by explaining that I was not a musician, not related to Bob Marley, not famous, that my autograph had no commercial value, and that I was merely one of many university types attending a university conference. Though my explanation was understood, the smiling Austrian lady (who said she had once briefly vacationed in Texas) continued begging that I autograph her coaster (or napkin). I scribbled my name. She clutched it to her bosom as if it were precious, and people at nearby tables applauded. Later that week (Thursday if I recall correctly) at another World Cup telecast at Residenz-platz (where I met conference participants Mary Herczog <clamotte@aol.com> and Steve Huchman), a young lady ran down from the fussball viewing stands and playfully-joyfully wrapped herself in my hair, and distracted fans applauded. On Friday morning, while purchasing postcards at an outdoor stand, I was surrounded by a small group of oriental ladies, one of whom embraced my hair and said, "Beuuuuutiful. Beuuuuuuutiful. Beuuuuuuutiful." while others gently touched, smiled, bowed, and snapped photographs. My hair was a tourist attraction. It was photographed on other occasions, maybe a half dozen or more times. In every instance, the photographer asked permission, in English or with gestures and smiles and pointing to the camera. Wherever I went,



it seemed I was given the best seats, the best tables, and invited to the front of the line. In those instances when I selected a less-than-the-best seat or table, someone would invite me to move to a better location. It was, I imagine, like being a small-time celebrity.

The Whitehead Conference went very very verrrrry well.

The conference website <[www.uni-salzburg.at/whiteheadconference/](http://www.uni-salzburg.at/whiteheadconference/)> provides complete information about the presentations, including abstracts and a large collection of photographs. The conference ended on Thursday afternoon. Philosopher Donald Wayne Viney, Viney's nephew (Mark? Viney), and I had a most enjoyable meal and conversation (about STAR TREK, MOBY DICK, DUNE, and of course about Charles Hartshorne) at a restaurant on the east side of Residenz-platz on Thursday evening 06 July 2006. On Friday morning 07 July of "Mozart 2006" I became a tourist. I revisited churches--Franziskanerkirche, Kollegienkirche, and St. Peter's.

In the old city, one feels surrounded by churches and crosses. The Salzburg sky is filled with crosses, many at the top of (and many more surrounding) splendid domes, towers (with bells and clocks), and tall steeples. At the Benedictine residence hall where I roomed, near the entrance at the foot of the stairway leading to the upper floors, there is a larger than life-sized three-dimensional wood carving of Jesus nailed to the cross. Every coming and going to my room on the second floor required a close encounter with this magnificent crucifix. When exiting this building, one sees across the courtyard, on the side of the next building over an archway leading to St. Peter's, there is a painting of Jesus on the cross attended by angels on each nailed hand. Throughout the old city, there are crucifixion scenes and other biblical scenes painted on exterior and interior walls, and especially on church ceilings and domes. One is constantly inspired to look upwards.

The churches are richly decorated with beautiful statues of biblical figures--Jesus, Mary, various saints, plus many angels and other winged figures. In St. Peter's church, against one of the tall rectangular columns over rows of little burning candles, there is a statue of a winged warrior in Roman body armor thrusting a long spear downward into the throat of a demonic-looking figure graveling under his left foot. At the top of that spear, there is a cross. Despite the presence of graphic crucifixion scenes and winged warriors deploying crosses as spears and swords, the prevailing atmosphere in the Salzburg churches is quiet, calm, solemn, reverent, and peaceful. Even in the July heat, against bare feet, the stone floor of St. Peter's is cool--almost cold. I was at peace wondering slowly around the interior of St. Peter's (sometimes taking a seat in the pews) from 14:30 to 16:30.

The 5:00 am Saturday 08 July 2006 taxi from Kolleg St. Benedikt to Salzburg Airport cost 13 Euros. John Cobb and I shared standing space in line and on the bus from the terminal to the airplane. We agreed that the conference had been a stunning success, and he was already looking forward to the 7th International Whitehead Conference in Japan (while I was dreading having to learn Japanese). Lufthansa Flight #6423 (a Fokker 70 Jet) departed for Frankfurt at 6:20 am and arrived around 7:30 am.

Prior to take-off from Frankfurt, I surrendered my window seat to an English-speaking woman with a nonwindow seat because she wanted to sit next to her daughter who was seated next to my window seat. Moments after squeezing into my new middle-nonwindow seat, I was somewhat annoyed when a flight attendant asked me, in English, to move to another seat. She gave me the designated seat section and number. When I reached said seat, I discovered I had been moved from coach to a business class window. The business class seats have mechanical massage and can be extended into a full length flat-level bed with an upper-body privacy screen. There is a color video screen with lots of movies to choose from and excellent audio headphones with many music options. The food and wine options are diverse. Five-star foods and wines flowed continuously. Noise canceling headphones, darkness screens, massage, and full-length beds allowed good sleeping. On a long transatlantic Lufthansa flight, the differences between business class and coach are huge. And with business class, rather than arriving stiff and fatigued, one arrives relaxed, well-feed, and rested.

Lufthansa Flight #438 (Airbus A340) left Frankfurt at 9:45 am on Saturday 8 July 2006, and 10 hours 45 minutes later landed at DFW Terminal D at 13:30 CDT. A yellow checker shuttle making several stops transported me to East University Blvd. for \$25.00. That afternoon I employed my now useful T-Mobile Sidekick II to email a 'Thank you' ("Danke schön") note to Father Bergmayer OSB.

**Concerning *academic* aspects of my July 2006 visit to Salzburg, Austria  
for the 6th International Whitehead Conference at Salzburg University:**

See *Whiteheadian Ethics: Abstracts and Papers from the Ethics Section of the Philosophy Group at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Whitehead Conference at the University of Salzburg, July 2006* (15 Angerton Gardens, Newcastle, NE5 2JA, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), edited by Theodore Walker Jr. and Mihály Toth.

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